



# Egremont News

Issue 12

November, 2003

## In the News:

**Selectmen:** We are hopeful that the Pdf format of this newsletter is helpful in solving the unreadable problems that we have been encountering in emailing this out to residents. Egremont's web page is up and running. Please visit at [www.egremont-ma.gov](http://www.egremont-ma.gov). Email us with your feed back - [tegrement@yahoo.com](mailto:tegrement@yahoo.com). A great big Thank You to Bruce Gventer for getting this done. This newsletter is on our web page as a down loadable document.

We wish to thank Joan Goodkind for her service to the Town as a Planning Board member. We welcome Charles Proctor to fill her place until the May, 2004 election.

The Selectmen are very excited over an opportunity to obtain grant funding to make the Library and the upstairs of the Town Hall handicapped accessible. A great big Thank You to Russ Longyear for bringing this funding to our attention and for doing the follow up work to get the application completed.

Sandra Martin has begun exploring obtaining USDA funding to make the Annex a Public Safety complex with the downstairs doubling as our town meeting hall. She has been told the project does qualify and we will be on the list for funding in 2005 - we missed the funding deadline for 2004.

### **Treasurer/Collector:**

Real estate and personal property tax bills have been mailed for the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of FY 04. These bills replace the reminder postcards that have been sent in prior years. We hope the bills are clearer and will present fewer problems and phone calls to clarify. **Please note:** The personal

property bills have an error in calculation. Anyone who paid the first half in full received a bill showing that the bill was paid in full but also showing a balance due for the quarter. The error was not caught until after the bills were mailed, please disregard. Second quarter payments are due by **November 3, 2003**. Please remember that the postmark is not accepted as timely. Payments received after the due date will accrue interest. As always, feedback is welcome and necessary for change, improvement or to just let us know how we are doing. Office hours are 7-3, Monday-Friday.

### **Police Department:**

The Egremont Police Department had a very busy and eventful summer with traffic, tourism, and activity in South County. Although the weather did dampen a lot of recreational activities this past summer, we kept busy responding to many calls for service and assistance. We had the good fortune of adding two part-time officers to our staff in early July and Officers Jonathan Finnerty and Trevor Manning have been extremely efficient and dedicated to the needs of our residents. They are doing an extremely commendable job in such a short period of time and are always eager to learn more and be available for whatever needs arise. We currently have a student officer attending the 21-week Police Academy at the Massachusetts Criminal Justice Training Center in Agawam. Kris McDonough, who has been working for the Town since 2002, will graduate in early December 2003 and assume full-time status and responsibilities. We are looking forward to Kris' return in the very near future. We are

continuously working with the Emergency Management Team to refine our emergency operation plans and trainings. REMINDERS: HUNTING SEASON is approaching and we want to remind everyone to be careful (hunters and non-hunters alike). There have been several sightings recently of bobcat, moose and other wild animals-please be aware of their presence; on July 1<sup>st</sup> the Commonwealth of Massachusetts increased the fee for License to Carry and Firearm Identification Cards to \$100.00; any questions regarding firearms applications or appointments can be addressed by calling 528-2160 to speak with Chief Bucknell. Feel free to stop by, say hello, and share your ideas or concerns. We are dedicated to serving the citizens of the Town of Egremont. As always, we thank you all for your support, assistance, and encouragement.

### **Council on Aging:**

Help! Help! A member of our Council is moving away. We need at least one new member. If others are interested, we would also welcome an Associate member to the Council. Some members have been on the Council for at least 10 years! We are running out of steam and would welcome new faces (and ideas) to work with us. The work does not require a lot of time, but is very rewarding!

**Flu Shots:** Seniors who have not yet had a flue shot, please remember that the Lee VNA will give flue and pneumonia shots at the North Egremont Firehouse on Thursday, November 6 from 10-11 am.

**Telephone Buddy System:** Any senior feeling isolated during the stormy winter months may have a daily phone call. If you wish someone to phone to see if you are okay, please call a member of the Council on Aging and these arrangements will be made.

### **Water Department:**

The Egremont Water Commissioners are pleased to announce that we have received final funding from the USDA Rural Development.

Proceeds from this grant/loan package will be used to install approximately 3000 feet of new water main along Route 23 east. This section of water main is very old and has had numerous leaks over the past few years. The Department will be extending the main on the Egremont-Sheffield Road about 100 feet and installing a new flush hydrant. This will enable us to efficiently flush this section of main on a regular basis. A contract has been signed with Joe Wilkinson, Inc. of Sheffield and work will begin on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2003. These two projects, when completed, will increase the pressure and improve the quality of water for many of our customers.

The Water Department continues to monitor water consumption and does leak detection on a regular basis. Please call the Water Department at 644-9614 if you suspect a water leak anywhere throughout the system.

Please remember that it is the responsibility of the property owner to insure that the water meter does not freeze this coming winter. If you have any questions or concerns about your meter do not hesitate to call the Water Department.

### **Board of Health:**

As many homeowners know, fall is an excellent time to complete your round of household chores before the harsh winter weather arrives. There are some septic system maintenance tips we would like to recommend.

First, if you haven't had your septic tank pumped in a while, now is the time. I know I'm beginning to sound like a bit of a broken record here but the reason our office keeps repeating this message is this relatively simple act, which currently costs approximately \$300, can save you from replacing your entire septic system. If you are one of the folks who says "I've had my septic system for 40 years and I've never had it pumped, never done a thing with it" you are the person I am talking to. If you've never had your septic tank pumped in 40 years (even ten years) consider yourself *really* lucky. It is nothing short of a miracle that your tanks hasn't overflowed

and blown your leaching field. When that happens, your field is ruined. You might as well say "hello excavators and mess in the backyard and goodbye rainy day fund I've been working so hard on." New systems are expensive.

Like the engine in your car, septic tanks need proper care. And with proper care comes added life to your system. When you have your tank opened up ask your pumper to take a good look at not only the condition of the tank but also the inlet and outlet tees. There are parts and pieces to septic systems that may require replacement.

Second, if your on-site septic system has a filter, now is the time to give it its annual cleaning. You can perform this work or have your pumper do it while he is there pumping your tank. If you do this yourself, put on rubber gloves, remove the filter and carefully give it a good going over on a high pressure setting on your hose. As stated, this is a job which should be done annually, and the reason being it is another way of extending the life of your septic system.

If you adhere to these few simple rules, your septic system will prove to be a safe and economical onsite method of disposing of your home wastewater. If you have any questions, or would like to know when your septic system was last pumped, please feel free to give our office a call.

### **Wastewater Management Committee:**

The musician Tom Petty recorded a terrific song in the '70s entitled "The Waiting Is The Hardest Part". The Wastewater Management Committee and potential Egremont users of a Wastewater Treatment Facility are in a waiting mode -- waiting to hear how generous the USDA/Rural Development will be with the grant request for the project. Who would have thought words from a classic rock and roll song would ring so true?

How much the project receives from this grant source is a large part of the project's success. The WMC realizes this project is only a

good one when it not only provides a beneficial service to the town and the townspeople but also delivers it at an affordable final cost to its users. Last May an application for grant funding was submitted to Rural Development and, if lucky, it can cover up to 75% of total costs in flat-out grant funding. It can also cover less and that would mean funding the remainder of the project with a higher proportion of loans. As a sort of buffer, the WMC filed an application with the State of Massachusetts for a low interest septic improvement loan program at a rate of 2% interest.

As to what the actual final project cost figures are, work is winding down on the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP). Once completed, the CWMP will provide a general scope of the project (who will benefit from being served by a sewer, how many users, etc.) and projected total costs. Projected annual fees to users cannot be compiled until we have the area of service defined and what the grant to loan ratio is.

When information is received the WMC will issue statements to the local press in hopes of broad coverage. Additional informational meetings, as promised, will be forthcoming. Phone calls to the office of the Board of Health with your inquiries regarding the status of the loan and other questions you may have, are always welcome. Waiting is sometimes a difficult thing, but be assured when the committee does hear something you will be informed. In the meantime, while we are all waiting let's all dust off our old Tom Petty vinyl LPs (remember those?) and play a great old song from the not so distant past.

### **Library:**

The Egremont Free Library has many current best selling authors on its shelves. John Grisham, Robert Ludlum, Steve Martini, Patricia Cornwell, Ruth Rendell, Nora Roberts.....come find hours of pleasure.

We have a book group that meets the last Tuesday of the month at 7:30 PM. The next date

is November 25. Come and join us. We all read the same book (paperback) and then talk about it. It's fun. You'll like it.

We have internet accessibility at the Library. Come in. It's free for the asking. We had a steady stream of summer visitors who took advantage of it this past summer.

Thinking of buying a new computer? A new appliance? The Library has *Consumer Reports* and many other magazines you might not want to buy but would like to read. These can be borrowed for one week.

Did you know that the EFL does not charge fines for late materials? We just ask that you be reasonable. Guess what? It works. Most people are very responsible about library materials.

Don't like to read. We have both videos and audiocassettes that you can borrow.

Do come see us!

### **Egremont Planning Board:**

The Egremont Planning Board has been working jointly with the Board of Selectmen in coordinating the review of Egremont's zoning bylaw. Planner Jeanne Armstrong and Attorney Mark Bobrowski have been reviewing our current bylaw and working with town boards and townspeople to identify areas of the bylaw which are ambiguous, to bring the bylaw into conformity with current statute and to reformat the bylaw for easy insertion of bylaw changes in the future.

While the intent is not to change the meaning of our current bylaw, in order to clarify some ambiguities it will be necessary for townspeople to make some policy decisions. One of the major issues facing the town is how to define home occupations and accessory uses and at what point such uses are extensive enough to be classified as commercial uses and require a special permit. Some of the other issues relate to bed-and-breakfast establishments and rental of rooms to boarders, accessory apartments and two-family homes, use of common driveways,

rear lots, commercial uses, and changes in nonconforming structures and uses.

In order to hear the input of townspeople on these issues and review the bylaw draft, a Community Forum was held on October 16, 2003, at Undermountain School, with the next Community Forum scheduled for November 17, 2003, at 7:00 PM at the North Egremont Firehouse. A third forum is tentatively scheduled for December 4, 2003. All townspeople are invited and urged to attend the community forum sessions, whether or not they have been involved in the bylaw process up until now.

It is critical that townspeople think about how property is used in Egremont and offer their input in order to shape what Egremont will be like in the future. Having this input from townspeople will hopefully allow the boards and consultants to present the town with a final bylaw draft which has been reviewed by the town and which the town will act favorably on at a town meeting in the spring.

Copies of the draft bylaw are available at the town hall, by email, and on the town website at [www.egremont-ma.gov](http://www.egremont-ma.gov). For further information, please contact the town hall at (413)528-0182 or [tegrement@yahoo.com](mailto:tegrement@yahoo.com).

### **Fire Department/E911:**

With Fire Prevention week here, it is a good time to review safety precautions for the coming winter time when more activities take place indoors.

First item to check is the batteries in the smoke alarms. It is the best reminder to do it when we change the clocks back to standard time. Batteries have a good shelf life, however it is best to change the batteries each year. Check the alarm after installing to see that they are in correctly.

The next thing to check is the condition of your E911 number on your residence. It should be placed on the outer driveway of your house so that it can be seen quickly from the road. Check it after this summer period to see that foliage has not blocked it. Cut away any

brush from it. It is critical for any responding emergency personnel to be able to see your address.

If you have not yet purchased your E911 plate, visit the Town Hall to get an order form. It can save a life.

### **Seeking:**

The Town is seeking the following:

Persons who have knowledge of the history of French Park. What was it before it was bequeathed to the Town? What was the chapel's use? Etc.

Veteran's of foreign wars - are you a veteran of any war? Please contact the Town Hall for inclusion on the roll of honor to be installed on the South Egremont Green. Do you know someone now deceased who should be included?

A representative to the So. Berk. Medical Reserve Corps.

School Crossing Guard for South Egremont School - paid position. Contact the Town Hall if interested.

### **Recycling:**

Did you know the Town is recycling cell phones and rechargeable batteries?

The Town has registered with WirelessFundraiser.com to recycle cell phones. We will be paid a small fee for each cell phone that we ship to them. Please drop your old cell phone at the Town Hall or Recycling Center.

The Town has registered with RBRC to recycle rechargeable batteries. The batteries are Ni-Cd, Ni-MH, Li-ion and Pb batteries commonly used in cordless power tools, cellular and cordless phones, laptop computers, camcorders, remote control toys, and portable household appliances. Please drop off at the Town Hall or Recycling Center for us to ship out.

### **Of Interest:**

Did you know that the Lee VNA visits the Town Hall the first Wednesday of every month to

conduct blood pressure checks? The nurse is here 11:30 to 12:30. Flu Vaccines will be given at the North Egremont Fire Station on Thursday, November 6<sup>th</sup> from 10am to 11am.

### **Egremont Garden Club:**

When the Egremont Garden Club was started in 1961, a charter was drafted for the group that states, "The object of the club shall be: the advancement of gardening, the development of home gardens, the furtherance of town beautification, the protection of forests, wild flowers and birds, and the promotion of conservation."

In the years following the formation of this group, these objectives have been fulfilled in many ways. Every year, two fund raisers are held: the "Spring Sale" and "Holiday in Egremont." These fund raisers are the source of money used for its many projects. Wreaths are made to decorate all public buildings in North and South Egremont. The tree on the village green is decorated with lights for the holiday season. Flowers and gardens are maintained on the green, at the Library and at Hillside Cemetery. A gardening library was created in memory of one of its members, and this coming year, plans are in the works to install flower boxes on the two bridges in South Egremont.

To help in advancement of gardening, club members feel that doing this through our schoolchildren is the best way to achieve that goal. Every year, field trips to the Berkshire Botanical Garden are sponsored for classes. Programs are planned in which children participate in planting, both at the school and with their parents. Money is also provided to aid in the gardening programs at the Southern Berkshire Regional schools.

Many of the projects are ones which go beyond the Town of Egremont. Every year, members staff a bake table at the annual Harvest Festival at the Botanical Garden. Members provide the baked goods, with all proceeds benefitting the Botanical Garden. Members have also participated in working at the River Walk,

and designating money to continue is program. This past year, support was given to forgotten veterans in New Boston, and to Ventfort Hall in a fund raising event. For several years, members also contributed to the Bouquets to Rockwell at the Rockwell Museum.

Many of our members have established beautiful home gardens. One of our monthly programs always includes a home garden tour. Other programs include speakers to help members further the other goals of the club.

Right now, members are busily planning for the "Holiday in Egremont" sale. Workshops are being held to make the flower and garden related items that will be for sale. These include clever tree ornaments, pot pourri, dried flower book marks and pictures, topiaries, and many other items. Every year, those who have sampled the delicious cookies and baked goods, are ready and waiting at the door to be in time to buy more.

We hope all of you will help the garden club to continue its' many projects by supporting the sale being held at the South Egremont Library on December 13 from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M.. Join your friends for coffee, a delicious cookie, and shopping for lovely gift items.

#### **BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE:**

Assessors - Wednesdays 9am to 11am & Tuesdays 7pm to 9pm  
 Board of Health - Tuesday & Wednesday 9-noon & Thursdays 10am to 11am  
 Board of Selectmen - Tuesday evenings 7pm  
 Planning Board - Second & Fourth Monday 7:30pm  
 Archives Room - November 1 and December 6  
 Building Inspector - Tuesdays 12:30pm - 3:30pm  
 Town Clerk - Tuesday evenings 7pm - 9pm  
 Conservation Commission - Second and Fourth Thursdays 7:00pm  
 Waste Water Management - Third Tuesday 3:30pm  
 Water Department - Fourth Thursday 4:30pm



#### **Egremont Free Library**

In the late 1820's a group of Egremont Residents established the Egremont Academy, a private school to prepare students who wished to go on to college. In 1882 the successors of the corporation sold the building to the Town of Egremont. It was used as the Town Hall until 1982, when the current Town Hall was purchased. The building now houses the Library and Archives room.

*Sunset at the Store*  
*David Allen Hunter*  
*early 1920's*

*There's lots o' folks yo'll find*  
*Who might jus' as well be blind*  
     *Though their eyes're good as mine,*  
     *they've never found 'em*  
*It was always queer t' me*  
*How they live so long an' see*  
     *Not a one o' all the beauties all around 'em.*  
*Jus't show yo' what I mean*  
*I will tell yo' what I seen*  
     *At the store the other night when I was*  
     *talkin'.*  
*I put on my other shoes*  
*An' went down t' hear the news*  
     *An' t' settle down my supper with the walkin'.*  
*There was quite a little troop*  
*Settin' there upon the stoop.*  
     *Jimmie Wilkins kind o' snickered when I*  
     *spied 'im.*  
*Slid himself along a bit.*  
*Then says he, "yo' better sit."*  
     *So I set upon the soap-box there beside 'im.*  
*Most o' them was cuttin' hay,*  
*Cause the most they had t' say*  
     *Was t' argy on the quickest way t' do it.*  
*This or that the only rake.--*  
*So they argied kind an' make,*  
     *'Till it make me kind o' sick t' listen to it.*  
*Whar the sun had sot, the sky*  
*Got so bright it took my eye--*  
     *Looked jus' like some upsot paint that kept a*  
     *spreadin'.*  
*Nary cloud up overhead*  
*But it got a splotch o' red.*  
     *Made me think o' them red roses at my weddin'.*  
*Ef I'd been a poet, I*  
*Might o' rit a poem, by guy!*  
     *But I'll have t' let it go an' say 'twas pretty.*  
*In the road was quite a crew*  
*Of some folks a-lookin' too.--*  
     *Looked like some o' them thar boarders from the city.*  
*Jimmie then, he sez t' me,*  
*"What yo' s'pose them critters see?"*  
     *Then I says, "Jus' see that sky so'll never*  
     *beat it!"*  
*Hardly budged his stupid head,*  
*"Starts t' look a little red."*  
     *Then he digs a chunk o' plug an' starts*  
     *t' eat it!*  
*Lots o' feelers of his kind*  
*Might as well be total blind*  
     *Though the good lord gave 'em eyes,*  
     *they never found 'em.*  
*All the while they keep 'em shut,*  
*Stickin' in a narrer rut.*  
     *Never see the loads of beauty all around*  
     *'em.*